

MACNEIL/LEHRER NEWSHOUR
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EXCERPTED

USSR/>LEHRER: President Reagan took out after the Soviets like <
>AFGHANISTAN>old times today in a harsh statement about Afghanistan.
Mr. Reagan said the continued occupation of Afghanistan
constitutes a 'serious impediment to the improvement of
bilateral relations with the Soviet Union.' In a written
statement released at the White House, he called for a
prompt negotiated end to what he called 'this brutal
conflict.' But Reagan was not the only one in Washington
to mark the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of
Afghanistan. Republican Sen. Gordon Humphrey of New
Hampshire held a news conference to say a few things too,
including some words of criticism for Mr. Reagan's
administration. SEN. GORDON HUMPHREY (R-N.H.): The
freedom fighters remain critically, tragically and
scandalously short of the weapons and supplies they so
desperately need. And so I question the management of the
American aid program. I suggest that there is no
effective accountability in the expenditure of these
funds. It appears that most of our aid is being lost in
the pipeline. And I suggest the intent of Congress is
being subverted by the apparent bungling of the
administration of the intended aid program.

LEHRER: Sen. Humphrey and others will be with us for the
lead focus section on Afghanistan in a few minutes.

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USSR/>LEHRER: We focus first tonight on Afghanistan, that <
>AFGHANISTAN 2>small, poor, harsh land in the mountains of Asia, which,
until five years ago, was mostly ignored by most of the
outside world. In December 1979, Soviet troops invaded
Afghanistan to bolster the leaders of a Moscow-backed
coup. Now, five years later, the Russians are locked in a
ferocious guerrilla war that has devastated the land and
driven 4 million of Afghanistan's population of 18 million
from their homes, most to meager refugee camps in
neighboring Pakistan. Today, the Soviets have an

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estimated 110,000 soldiers inside the country and another 40,000 poised on the northern border. They control the country's few major cities, including the capital of Kabul. The guerrillas, fiercely independent tribesmen who call themselves the Mujahadeen, or holy warriors, control mountainous areas in the harsh country. Earlier this year, the Soviets, determined to wipe out the guerrilla strongholds, launched saturation bombing attacks. High-altitude jets and helicopter gunships devastated many villages and destroyed livestock and crops. The Mujahadeen kept up their hit-and-run attacks and ambushes, occasionally raiding even Kabul. But their sniper rifles, mortars and captured Soviet ground-to-air missiles cannot match the Russian air power. U.S. aid to the rebels, which flows through Pakistan, has totaled more than \$600 million since 1979. The Reagan administration says it will request 280 million more next year. But recent government reports have questioned how much of that aid is actually getting to the fighters and the refugees. And it also questions the quality and type of military equipment involved. The continuing flood of refugees into Pakistan is straining that nation's capacity to provide for the Afghans without causing severe internal, economic and political problems. As the war enters its sixth year, both sides appear determined to fight on, even into the next generation. Refugee camps in Pakistan have become military training centers for boys and young men. And the Soviets are also reported to be sending thousands of young Afghans to Russia for study and indoctrination so they can be Afghanistan's pro-Soviet leaders of tomorrow.

LEHRER: Meanwhile, the rest of the world watches and complains. For five years, presidents and Congresses of the United States have been the leading complainers. Today, President Reagan issued another strong presidential statement of condemnation. It was matched by one from Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who believes the United States is not doing enough to help the other side in Afghanistan. Senator, your statement today was tough. You said that our aid is being lost in the pipeline because of mismanagement. What do you mean there, specifically?

SEN. GORDON HUMPHREY (R-N.H.): Well, that's right, Jim. Every, every firsthand report that I've encountered, and I've talked to reporters who've spent weeks inside Afghanistan and who've recently returned, military analysts and others who've been there, every firsthand account I've been able to, to uncover indicates that only a trickle of the aid is coming out of the far end of the pipeline, in contrast to what we're putting in at the front end here in Washington. And for years, we've been increasing, the Congress has been increasing the level of funding for this program, because there's broad and, and deep support in the Congress, bipartisan, across every

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kind of, of dividing line, to aid these valiant people. It's such a compelling cause. And we've, we've increased appropriations year after year. And yet today, despite all of that aid, five years later, despite, as, as noted on your news clip a moment ago, the, the expenditure of hundreds, hundreds of millions of dollars, ah, the rebels today are, are poorly armed, poorly equipped. Most of them still don't have proper footwear. They're still making sandals out of used tires. They don't have ammunition for their larger weapons, which are the only weapons effective against the Soviet weaponry, and have very few of those weapons to begin with and not what they really need. Just, just to give you one example, Jim, one of the reporters I spoke with the other day, this weekend, in fact, who just came back, related an experience he had, I believe it was in Paktia Province, which is that just across the border from Panjshir, he discovered that one of the commanders, one of the important commanders in that province didn't even have a professionally drawn map of the area for which he was responsible. He was, this, this commander was using a hand-drawn, crude and, and inaccurate map. So the reporter gave him, gave the commander a map, a commercial map that he had brought in. And this commander, according to the report, was just childlike in his delight in having a basic tool.

LEHRER: Where does the fault lie, Senator? HUMPHREY: Well, I believe it lies in, in the administration of the program. I'm glad to hear President Reagan has once again issued a statement of support. But the problem is we keep encouraging the freedom fighters and sort of implying that help is on the way, and yet it doesn't arrive. The fault, I think, fundamentally, is that, is that we have taken a hands-off policy. Our people in Panjshir and, and in the northern...

LEHRER: When, when you say 'our people,' who do you mean? HUMPHREY: Americans.

LEHRER: American, American employees of the United States government? HUMPHREY: Yes--as I'm told, are forbidden to have anything to do with the freedom fighters in the refugee camps and, and, and the headquarters around Panjshir. And so it's all done through intermediaries and apparently with no procedures at all for accountability or for accounting for these weapons.

LEHRER: Uh huh. So you're saying the stuff's getting ripped off? HUMPHREY: I, I can't say for sure where it's going. But we know, almost with a certainty, that very little of it's getting through, despite increased appropriations year after year.

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LEHRER: Is it your belief, Senator, that if this aid was getting through to the right people that the war would be going differently than it's going? HUMPHREY: I think so. I don't claim that the freedom fighters can win a military victory over the Soviets. But remember, our official policy is to force a negotiated settlement which would lead to the withdrawal of the Soviets and, and the re-establishment of an independent and, and free Afghanistan. But we're not even providing the freedom fighters with enough weaponry and equipment to accomplish even that. What we're doing instead, ah, the effect, I'm afraid to say, is rather cynical, we're, we're providing them with enough, just barely enough to stay active and to get shot to pieces, but not enough to, to, ah, force the Soviets out.

LEHRER: And actually helping the Soviet position more than we are our own, is that what you're saying?

HUMPHREY: Well, I'd say that we're playing into the Soviet strategy, not only for the reason that we're not getting these weapons through because of bungling in the administration, poor design and poor execution, but also in, in, in the design of the program. We need to do far more internal to Afghanistan in the way of providing economic assistance so people will stay instead of leaving and going into the refugee camps, which, as I say, plays into the strategy of the Soviets.

LEHRER: Thank you, Senator. Robin?

MACNEIL: An official administration view now from Phyllis Oakley, the State Department officer who monitors U.S. policy towards Afghanistan on a day-to-day basis. A career foreign service officer, Ms. Oakley has spent the last two years serving as the State Department's Afghan desk officer. Ms. Oakley, how do you respond to the senator that only a trickle of U.S. aid is getting through to the freedom fighters? PHYLLIS OAKLEY (State Department): Well, I think I will use the word that Undersecretary Michael Armacost used in his on-the-record press briefing on Dec. 20. And that is, you have to look at the 'empirical situation' on the ground in Afghanistan. After five years of fighting--and that in itself is an incredible story of an indigenous resistance movement that had begun in 1978 and following the Soviet invasion in 1979--this movement has grown and spread and today become so effective that it has been successful in keeping the certainly heavier-armed and -equipped army of the Soviet Union from achieving its objectives in Afghanistan. And first of all, I would like to say I welcome this attention to the question of Afghanistan and am delighted to be here to discuss this. But let's look at the fighting in 1984, against an increasingly aggressive military posture of the Soviet Union that began in the seventh Panjshir offensive

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in April and May moved west to *Harat, around Kabul and now in the eastern part of Afghanistan, where heavy fighting still continues. The Soviets have not been able to achieve their objectives and we think perhaps have slightly lost some ground. I'm sure you all are aware that the question of why any country might be doing to supply assistance to the refugees and to the Mujahadeen is considered an intelligence question, and I can't comment on it. But you've got to look at the situation on the ground and what the Mujahadeen have been able to achieve.

MACNEIL: Can you comment on this? Would you say that the U.S. can, the administration can point with pride to the success of the resistance and, ah, and claim some credit for it? OAKLEY: Well, I, I would phrase it a little differently. I would point with great pride to our relationship with the government of Pakistan and what the government of Pakistan has, has done in these past five years of standing up to the Soviet threat, to welcoming the refugees, the between 2 and 3 million refugees who have poured into Pakistan, and who have, with us, sought a negotiated political settlement, as the senator pointed out. And I think that we can point with great pride to what the combined support of these two countries, as well as the vast majority of the world, as witnessed by the vote at the U.N., recent vote of the Islamic conference, and that together, and this is not just an East-West, Soviet-U.S. problem, but what we, with the vast majority of the countries of the world, have been able to do to show our admiration and moral support for the Afghan freedom fighters.

MACNEIL: Well, I know you're in a difficult position and you can't, because it's an intelligence question, comment on the flow of this support to the freedom fighters directly, but let me ask you this: Are you satisfied that the program, however clandestinely it's being administered, are you and the State Department satisfied it's being well-administered and that it's having the effect intended by the Congress? OAKLEY: Well, let me answer that in a very broad term. I'm not gonna be satisfied in Afghanistan until the Soviet troops are out, and that's the goal of U.S. policy. And I agree with the senator that we have not sought a military victory. And certainly, we have never said that the Afghan Mujahadeen are going to be able to oust, militarily, the Afghan resistance. We seek a political settlement. And the military pressure on the ground is certainly an important part of that pressure. It's not enough the Soviets have not yet negotiated. And we aren't going to be satisfied until we can bring them to a settlement that gets the Soviet troops out.

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MACNEIL: Well, would you say, again on this point that he raised, that his charge that this is being scandalously mismanaged, this program, is an unfair charge? OAKLEY: That gets very close to, to a difficult situation that's hard for me to, to answer. But I would go back to the empirical situation. If there is a program and it's so badly managed, how can the Afghan Mujahadeen continue to thwart Soviet objectives in Afghanistan? The Soviets have not been able to wear down their resistance. They've not been able to capture the loyalty of the people. They have not built an effective Afghan army. And they have not increased popular support for Soviet, ah, the Soviet ruler, Babrak Karmal. I think you have to look at the total picture.

MACNEIL: I see. OAKLEY: And the Soviets are not winning in Afghanistan.

MACNEIL: Well, thank you. Jim?

LEHRER: Senator, how do you respond to that? HUMPHREY: Well, I especially disagree with the last statement. The Soviets, in fact, are winning. They're not winning militarily, because they haven't sought to win militarily. They know that they would have to commit enormously larger numbers of troops and wealth than they have already to defeat a guerrilla force. That's just in the nature of guerrilla warfare, especially in rugged terrain and with a, with a determined foe, as the freedom fighters are. They're not seeking a military victory. What they're seeking is what they sought and achieved back in the '20s and '30s, when they, when they subjugated other regions of the USSR. They're seeking to drive out the population. They're seeking to, and succeeding in depopulating Afghanistan. They've already killed off all the doctors and, and the intelligence, with the exception of those they could subvert into their own orbit. They're carpet bombing. They're fostering famine. They're destroying crops. They're, they're, they've destroyed the medical facilities, as I've stated, such that if you're wounded today as a combatant or as an innocent, ah, ah, victim, you're dead. There's no medical care in Afghanistan. They are, they have a deliberate campaign to, to drive out the population as a way of un...

LEHRER: And it's working. HUMPHREY: Yeah.

LEHRER: Your, your position is that it's working.

HUMPHREY: And they're going to win if, if we don't change our policy. OAKLEY: Well, I, I wouldn't agree with you on that. And I think, though, the discussion that we're having highlights one of the gravest problems of dealing with Afghanistan, and that is the question of really knowing what is going on in the country. Very few people

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can get in. The reporters that go in have to trek in. You talked with people who've come from the East. It is a very spotty picture. And it's a problem for all of us, not only you, but certainly for those of us in the department. So I think you have to weigh the individual reports with the, the policy of the entire government. Certainly in the East, these, these efforts have resulted in depopulation. This is not true of the entire country. Certainly, the Panjshir Valley is now deserted, but it's not true of the northern plains, where there is still a sufficiency of food. And part of this, as I say, the problem is just knowing what is going on and what we can do to be effective. I don't think the story of Afghanistan is over. And I'm not gonna throw in the towel. And I'm gonna keep up my admiration and support for the Afghan resistance. HUMPHREY: Nor am I, and that's why I'm, I'm issuing this criticism. The Soviets are going to win because they are in fact succeeding in depopulating the country.

LEHRER: Is it... HUMPHREY: They've already driven out a quarter of the population.

LEHRER: Is it your position, Mrs. Oakley, that that's not what the Soviets want? OAKLEY: I think the Soviets certainly have used the technique of depopulation and driving out the civilian population in certain areas that are of strategic importance and which are known for strategic support of the Mujahadeen. But I don't believe that it is true in the entire country, certainly on the areas bordering the road up to the Soviet Union, certainly in the Panjshir Valley, in the area of Logar and then over close to the border. This has often been the result of such policies. But, again, it is not completely countrywide.

LEHRER: All right. Well, neither of you go away. We'll be right back. (Oakley and Humphrey laugh) Robin?

MACNEIL: Would more U.S. aid help end the fighting? Or will it have to end by negotiation? To discuss that, we have Selig Harrison, one of the foremost American experts on Afghanistan, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment in Washington. Mr. Harrison just returned from a trip to the region. He's written extensively on the war. His most recent article, 'Afghanistan's Self-Determination and Soviet Force Withdrawal,' was published in the current issue of the Journal of the U.S. Army War College. Mr. Harrison, Sen. Humphrey just said the Soviets are going to win. Is he right? SELIG HARRISON (Carnegie Endowment): I think as long as aid to the resistance is provided, the resistance will fight. They'll fight even if aid isn't provided, some sections of it. But to, to say that the Soviets are going

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to win, it seems to me, is not the, not the way to look at it. The, the Soviets are building a stronger and stronger position, and they're certainly not going to be driven out. So we're at a situation now where the war is escalating. The Soviets have got 150,000 men in the country at any one time. I've just, I've just been in Pakistan. I've talked to intelligence people in the Pakistan government, in the Indian government, who have access to what's going on in Afghanistan. The Soviet, the Soviets have more men in now than ever. We have been escalating during the past two years. A great deal of assistance has been getting in. I strongly disagree with Sen. Humphrey. Certainly, some of the aid has been going into the black market. Certainly, the Afghans are very disunited. They don't have a well-coordinated military operation and they don't have any political follow-up, so that when they win a battle, they can't consolidate their control over the territory where they won the battle. So they're on kind of a treadmill. A lot of the aid is being dissipated. But certainly it's an escalating upward curve in which heavy artillery, heavy machine guns are getting in. I think the most important criticism that the senator could make to the administration is that the management of ammunition inputs and programs that would keep the weapons that are going in operational certainly could be improved. But basically, this situation can't go beyond a certain point. The aid has to go in through Pakistan. It's a country of 100 million people. It's a very important country to the United States and to the stability of, of that region. And I...

MACNEIL: More, more important than Afghanistan to the United States? HARRISON: Well, I think you have to look at the region as a whole. If the war in Afghanistan escalates beyond a certain point, the Soviets, as they've indicated recently with their bombing raids into the border areas of Pakistan, with their continuing threats to destabilize through supporting the ethnic insurgents in Baluchistan and in the Sind and in the Northwest Frontier, ah, escalation is a very dangerous thing for Pakistan...

MACNEIL: Let me... HARRISON: ...which is...

MACNEIL: Let me ask you, sorry to interrupt, just let me ask you this, finally. Is U.S. policy, as you understand it at present, do you think it's realistic in working towards or encouraging the negotiated settlement that Mr. Reagan reiterated today Washington wants? HARRISON: No, I don't. I, I think that we are correct in providing aid to the, to the freedom fighters. But we've got to accompany that with a very flexible approach to the U.N. negotiations currently going on. They're gonna resume on the 13th of February in Geneva. We haven't convinced the people of that south Asian region I just visited, and I

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don't think we've convinced most of world opinion, that we are prepared for a settlement that will get the Soviet forces out unless it also provides for a change of regime in which the Soviet regime that is now there would have to be replaced by a completely different type of regime, which most of world public opinion, I would argue, doesn't necessarily consider necessary. And there's a big difference between a settlement that gets the Soviet forces out and a settlement that insists on a basic political turning of the clock back (sic).

MACNEIL: OK. Jim?

LEHRER: Ms. Oakley, what's your comment on that? OAKLEY: Well, I would certainly agree with, with Sagan (sic), we've often talked about this, of the role of the United States in the negotiation, that our goal is negotiated political settlement. We feel that we have made every effort to give, rend our, lend our support to the Pakistanis in their indirect negotiations with the Afghans and with the Soviets there as observers. The problem in the negotiations is Soviet willingness to negotiate the withdrawal of their forces. They claim that the problem of Afghanistan is outside interference, but we don't have what we consider to be 115,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, with the number between 30-, 35- or 40,000 just over the border in the Soviet Union. And we feel that the negotiations have not succeeded because it has been the Soviet willingness to negotiate.

LEHRER: So you don't, you disagree, you say Harrison's wrong when he says the problem is the U.S. insistence that the Soviet influence leave along with the troops? OAKLEY: I disagree with him, and we've been over this on the U.S. role of support for the negotiations.

LEHRER: Senator, what's your view of how the United States is playing a negotiated settlement bet? HUMPHREY: Apparently without much success. It's been five years now. There doesn't appear to be any movement on the part of the Soviets to leave or to do any of the things that we seek through negotiations. And why should they? They are winning, as I've said. Mr. Harrison is the first witness, eyewitness to, I've heard, who says that a great deal of aid is getting through. Every other witness I've talked to or whose remarks I've read in transcript, when they've appeared before Senate committees, have indicated that only a small amount is getting through, it's cruelly inadequate. In any case, we ought to be talking about what the intent is of Congress. We're the ones who provide the appropriations, so it's the intent of Congress that we would provide an effective amount of aid that would allow the freedom fighters to fight effectively. That it would be cruel to provide only enough so that they

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could struggle along, and yet that's what we're doing, practically speaking.

LEHRER: Is that your reading of it too, Mr. Harrison? We're giving just enough aid to keep these people fighting, but not enough for them to make any difference.

HARRISON: Pakistan doesn't want the level and sophistication of the aid to go, to go to a point that would provoke destabilization of Pakistan. And the United States, properly, in my opinion, is afraid, is concerned that the Soviets may move into Pakistan in various ways that could draw us in. So we have every reason to be restrained. HUMPHREY: Well, the State Department, of course, always says that President Zia of Pakistan is worried. But I can assure you that Zia is more worried about what will happen to Pakistan or parts of it, Baluchistan and other parts, if and when the Soviets consolidate their hold on Afghanistan. Parts of Pakistan will be next and Zia knows that. And I think all this talk about Zia being the bottleneck on, or Pakistan being the bottleneck on our aid program is, is an effort to hide behind something that's more shadow than substance.

LEHRER: Is that true, Mrs. Oakley? OAKLEY: Well, again, I don't agree with that. I think the position of Pakistan, not only in welcoming the refugees, but opposing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has been a very dangerous, gutsy position. And I think that we have to look at what is possible and realistic in that area and not, perhaps, what we might like.

LEHRER: Mr. Harrison, if we're all around five years from now and this program is still on the air and we invite you to come on as a guest, are we still going to be talking about the Russians and the Soviets and U.S. pressure and all that sort of business in Afghanistan? HARRISON: If we continue to provide aid at present levels, the resistance will continue to fight, the Soviets will bring in more forces, their regime in Kabul will become more consolidated. Time is on their side, and every year that passes, it's harder to get a good settlement.

LEHRER: And Sen. Humphrey will be holding a news conference on the 10th-year anniversary and Mrs. Oakley will be here and we'll see you then. Thank you all. Robin?

MACNEIL: There are still three parts to come on the NewsHour. Charles Krause gives us a picture of a Nicaraguan town caught in civil war, like the meat in a sandwich. In another focus section, we join the debate dividing colleges. Should scholarships be awarded for need or for merit as well? And we profile the unusual man Boston found to run its prison.

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